



# Targeting nurses to improve paediatric and adolescent viral load suppression: A package of technical assistance

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# Background: The Third 90

- In South Africa, the management of children and adolescents on ART remains a challenge<sup>1</sup>:
  - Incorrect doses for their weight
  - Complicated ART regimens,
  - Inadequate VL monitoring,
  - Inadequate adherence counselling and disclosure of HIV status

All of which impact adherence and lead to drug resistance.

- **Problem:** How to provide technical assistance to over 200 facilities in three provinces?

1. Meyers et al., JID, 2007



# Methods

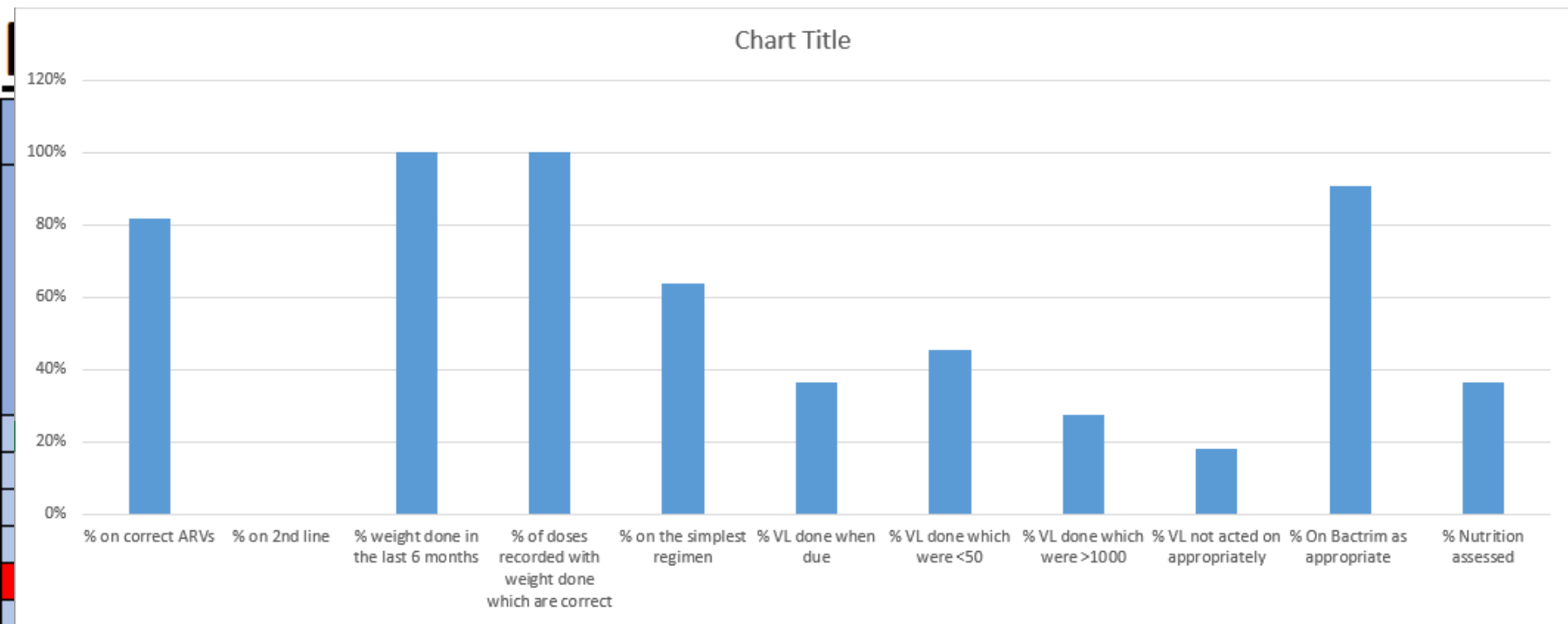
- 1) Automated file review template**
- 2) Nurses viral load workshops**
- 3) NHLS VL Results for Action Report**
- 4) Paediatric HIV Helpline**



# 1. Automated File review template

- Convenient sample
- Files with high viral loads

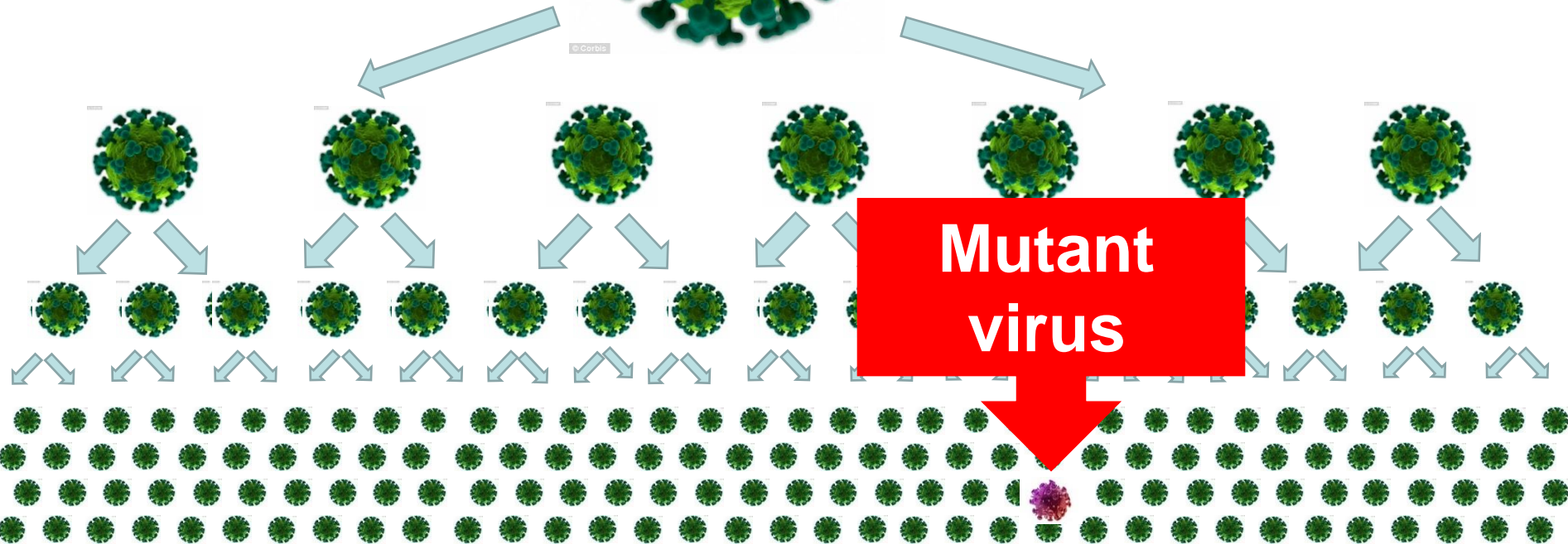
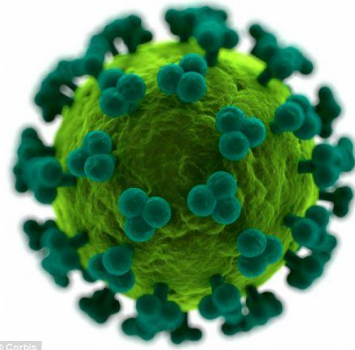
Total files reviewed	11
% on correct ARVs	82%
% on 2nd line	0%
% weight done in the last 6 months	100%



7	Patient 7	64772	2002-10-16	15	1	0
8	Patient 8	090809	2009-08-09	8	1	1
9	Patient 9	61505	2000-12-20	17	1	0
10	Patient 10	61534	2005-09-21	12	0	0
11	Patient 11	12345	2004-06-04	13	1	0

# 2. Nurses Viral load workshops

- Practical
- Case discussions



# 3. NHLS VL Results for Action

- Follow up on individual patients is challenging
- Many results received weekly from the NHLS VL RfA
- Interventions to suppress VL are varied and complex

## High Viral Loads in Children and Adolescents – A checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Facility name: \_\_\_\_\_ File number: \_\_\_\_\_

Retrieve File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Result: Date: __/__/20__ _____ copies/ml</li> <li>• Previous VL and date: Date: __/__/20__ _____ copies/ml</li> <li>• Previous VL and date: Date: __/__/20__ _____ copies/ml</li> <li>• Has the patient defaulted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>
Discuss with clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this a VL we need to act on? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• When is follow up needed? Date: __/__/20__</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>
Contact the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the patient successfully contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If not:</li> <li>• Were three calls attempted on different days and times of the day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Have the WBOTs made three home visits? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Did you manage to get through/find the patient? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• When will they return? Date: __/__/20__</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>
Support patient and/or caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If contacted, what steps have been taken:</li> <li>• One-on-one enhanced adherence / step up counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Is their disclosure status recorded in their file? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Fully disclosed: Referral to support group <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Partially/Not disclosed to: Referral for disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Have social problems been identified. Refer social worker <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Caregiver/parent referred to parenting group <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• If necessary, contact the Psychosocial Helpline (0713723550)</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>
Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you called the Paediatric HIV Helpline (0823526642)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>• Should the regimen be changed to: (circle) Change dosing schedule / Optimise current doses / Holding regimen / Second line / Third line</li> <li>• Has the change been made in the patient file? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>
Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date returned: Date: __/__/20__</li> <li>• Follow up planned for: Date: __/__/20__</li> <li>• What must be done at follow up? (Circle) Viral Load (3 months after intervention) Enhanced Adherence Counselling Refer to support group</li> <li>Date: _____ Sign: _____</li> </ul>

4.

# Right to Care HELPLINE

For clinicians, social workers, counsellors and other healthcare workers needing expert advice on all paediatric ART, adult ART, or advice on adolescent and paediatric psychosocial issues.

**Call during office hours.**

**"Please call me" and messages may be sent.**

## Paediatric & Adolescent HIV Helpline

Email: [paedshelp@righttocare.org](mailto:paedshelp@righttocare.org)

**0823526642**

## Paediatric & Adolescent Psychosocial Helpline

Email: [pshelp@righttocare.org](mailto:pshelp@righttocare.org)

**0713723550**

## Adult HIV Helpline

Email: [adultarv@righttocare.org](mailto:adultarv@righttocare.org)

**0828993893**



# Results: File Review Template

475 files from 25 clinics and 2 hospitals

	Average	Number	Variation between facilities
Correct ARVs	93%	440	(50% - 100%)
Correct dose for weight	76%	360	(57% - 100%)
Simplest regimen prescribed	65%	308	(9% - 100%)
Viral load done when due	83%	395	(13% - 100%)
Viral load <50	50%	235	(0% - 100%)
Viral load >1000	28%	134	(0% - 100%)

235 files with high VL were managed



# Results: Nurses Viral Failure Workshops

- 8 workshops given in 2017  
(2 staff members for 8 days)
- **258 nurses** trained from **149 facilities**
- Course evaluation by participants scored 95%
- Quality of lectures scored 98%.

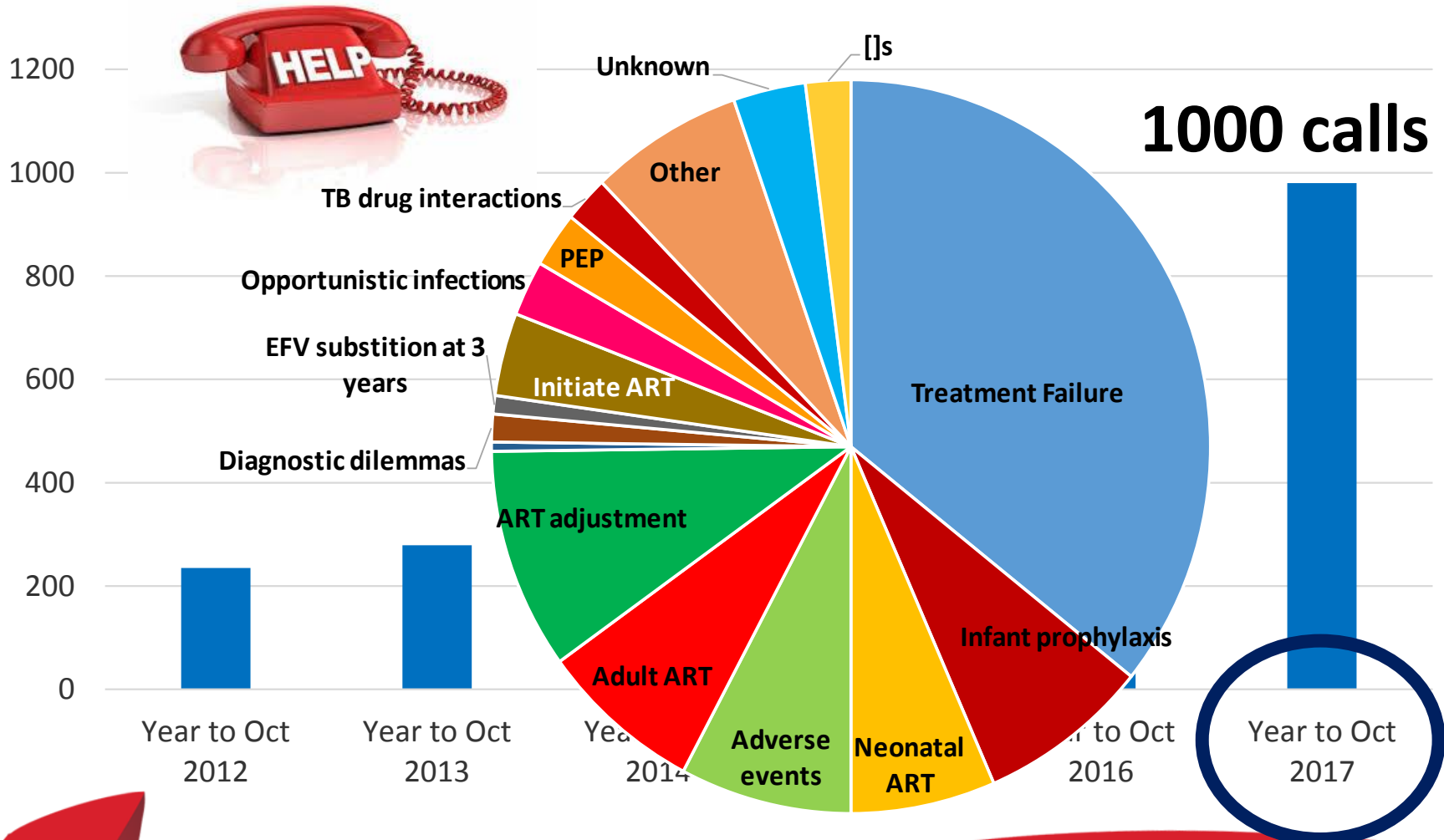


# Results: NHLS VL RfA

- 64 children identified with high viral loads
- 25% (n=16) received an intervention
- 64% (n=41) were still being traced
- 11% (n=7) were lost to follow up or had no file at the facility

Patient DOB	Sex	Patient Age	Taken Date	HIV VL Result (Detected VL)	Total No. of Previous Consecutive VL >1000
02-SEP-2017	F	1 month 15 days	17-OCT-2017	6 709 475	
09-JUL-2017	F	3 months 16 days	25-OCT-2017	1 924 895	
02-JUN-2002	M	15 years 4 months 16 days	18-OCT-2017	1 110 000	1
08-FEB-2017	F	8 months 15 days	23-OCT-2017	1 030 000	

# Results: Paediatric HIV Helpline



# Results: bringing it all together

## Kamhlushwa Clinic

- File reviews performed in January 2017
- Nurses Viral Failure Workshop took place in April 2017
- Use of the helpline for ongoing support

	Total Viral loads	VL ≥1000	% VL ≥1000
Sep-16	395	145	<b>37%</b>
Sep-17	493	133	<b>27%</b>

27% decrease in rate of high viral load



# Conclusions

- A package of paediatric technical assistance is **useful and necessary** to decrease viral loads in children and adolescents.
- The automated file review template allows a quick method of improving many patient's management, **identifying problem areas** and **mentoring nurses** on problem areas.
- Focussed training is a cheap and quick method of **reaching many people and many facilities**.
- VL RfA follow up is **labour intensive** but shows **direct results** and is simplified by using the checklist.
- The helpline is **readily used** by nurses to receive help with treatment failure and other difficult cases.



# Recommendations

- Enter a facility with a baseline assessment and file review
- Identify and explain problem areas to facility staff
- Offer a range of interventions focussing on the gaps identified
- Together create a tailored package
- Ongoing support through helplines
- Monitor progress with repeated file reviews at regular intervals



# Summary points:

- The automated file review template is a cheap, quick and easy platform to:
  - identify problem areas in a facility
  - mentor staff on problem areas
  - monitor progress
- Focussed training is a cheap and quick method of reaching many people and many facilities.
- The Paediatric HIV Helpline is also a cheap and much needed resource for ongoing support.
- Following up children with high VLs from the NHLS RfA Report can be simplified using the high VL checklist.
- These interventions work well as a package of TA to support nurses from different angles.



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## **Disclaimer:**

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